

Remarks/Arguments:

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-6, 8-11, 13-16, and 18-30 are pending; Claims 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 22, and 27-30 are amended; and no claims are newly added or cancelled herewith. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment, as support for this amendment may be found in the specification at page 4, lines 22-26, for example.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 4-6, 9-11, 14-16, 19-21, 23, and 27-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Naiki et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,101,018, hereafter Naiki) in view of Hamada et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,246,463, hereafter Hamada); Claims 3, 8, 13, 18, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Naiki in view of Hamada and further in view of Nakayama (JP 5-6077); Claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Naiki in view of Hamada and further in view of Ito (U.S. Pat. No. 5,471,236); Claim 24 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Naiki in view of Hamada and further in view of Kitamura (U.S. Pat. No. 4,393,387); and Claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Naiki in view of Hamada and further in view of Komatsu (U.S. Pat. No. 5,774,248).

Applicant thanks Examiner Pham for the interview granted Applicant's representative on September 23, 2003. During the interview, independent Claim 1 was discussed with regard to Naiki.

With regard to the rejection of Claims 1, 4-6, 9-11, 14-16, 19-21, 23, and 27-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Naiki in view of Hamada, that rejection is respectfully traversed. Independent Claims 1, 6, 11, 16, 21 and 27-30 have been amended to recite a laser diode array having at least three light emitting points arranged in equal interval and configured to emit respective laser beams that form corresponding laser beam spots on a

recording medium at a minimum recording interval, wherein the equal interval is not greater than the minimum recording interval, irrespective of an image density.

The outstanding Office Action relies upon Naiki to show that the equal interval is not greater than the minimum recording interval. However, Naiki does not disclose or suggest that the recording interval is equal, regardless of the image density. In fact, as described in column 9, lines 5-25 of Naiki, the recording interval depends upon the light density. For example, when forming an image of 1200 dpi, the light beam spots 30a to 30f are at an interval of approximately 21.2 μm in the direction of subscanning on the photosensitive drum 25.¹ In the case where the image density is 400 dpi or 800 dpi, the equal interval between the light beam spots 30a to 30d is equal to 31.8 μm and 63.5 μm , respectively.² Accordingly, from this description, it is evident that Naiki fails to disclose or suggest that the laser beam arrays are positioned from each other at an equal interval, irrespective of an image density.

As Naiki fails to disclose or suggest the limitations in Claim 1, and none of the other cited references were relied upon for the equal interval feature, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, and 27-30 patentably distinguish over the references of record. It is therefore respectfully requested that the outstanding rejections of Claims 1, 3-6, 8-11, 13-16, and 18-30 be withdrawn.

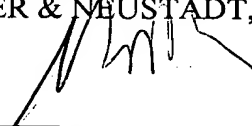
¹ Naiki, col. 8, lines 63-66.

² Id. at col. 9, lines 39-52.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing discussion and present amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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